Model Standards for
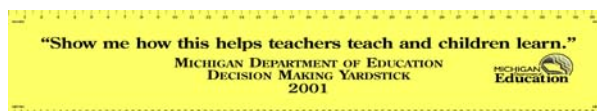
Out-of-School Time Programs

in Michigan

Michigan State Board of Education
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INTRODUCTION

In fiscal years 2000/2001 and 2001/2002, Early Childhood and Parenting Programs of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), in collaboration with the Family Independence Agency (FIA), funded a Super Pilot Out-of-School Time (OST) project. The purpose of this project was to improve quality, increase sustainability, and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies utilized by OST programs to develop and enhance quality. This project was also charged with the task of identifying best practices, creating an operations manual for use by school districts developing OST programs, and developing an evaluation protocol for use with OST programs. The original charge was to develop these tools for schools. They will be available and appropriate for all OST programs.

A committee was formed from MDE and three school districts representing geographically diverse urban, rural and small town populations. These representative districts employ directors with leadership roles in statewide professional organizations and have made a commitment to quality through National School-Age Care Alliance accreditation. The OST committee was charged with the task of writing model standards for quality OST programming. The standards may be used as a framework for the design and implementation of high-quality programs that meet the specific and different needs of children during the hours outside of the school day. This committee began in August 2001 and concluded its assignment in June 2002. The committee's extensive research and practical knowledge of a combined 95 years of experience in OST programs resulted in a draft of this document.

On June 13, 2002, the Michigan State Board of Education adopted the recommendations of its Task Force on Integrating Communities and Schools. One of the recommendations was to develop and disseminate model standards for programs offered during out-of-school time. In September of 2002, the State Board of Education approved the draft document for the purpose of accepting public comment.

The draft document was circulated widely in the fall of 2002, with comments accepted by mail, e-mail, and at five public meetings. Subsequently, P.A. 695 of 2002 was enacted, requiring the Department of Education to develop model standards for before and after school programs for students in grades K-8. The committee, with additional members, reconvened in January 2003 to consider the public comments and to make revisions consistent with the new law. The Department of Education then met with the Department of Consumer and Industry Services to collaborate on the content as required by the new law.

This document is designed to assist schools and other organizations in developing high-quality comprehensive out-of-school time programs for students who attend elementary and middle schools. The standards presented are based on research concerning quality programs for school-age children. These standards are not meant to be comprehensive for programs serving high school students, who have diverse interests and demands on their out-of-school time. However, many of the standards may be applicable to programs for these older students. This document will assist local administrators in their efforts to implement high-quality programs for students in comprehensive OST programs. A section on single-purpose programs indicates which standards should be followed in programs that are not designed to be comprehensive.

P.A. 695 of 2002 sets out minimum requirements for out-of-school time programs in public schools that have been exempted from the Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers. Quality indicators required by that law for exempt programs are included in this document in bold type.

A set of critical components for out-of-school time programs is presented in this document as six distinct areas for which quality standards have been established. These components are:

- Health, Safety, and Nutrition;
- Human Relationships and Staffing;
- Indoor and Outdoor Environment;
- Program and Activities;
- Administration; and
- Single-Purpose Programs.

These standards define the recognized indicators of OST program quality. References are listed at the end of the document.

DEFINITIONS

The Michigan legislation, in P.A. 695 of 2002, refers to before school, after school, times and days when there is no school due to teacher training, snow days, vacations, summer vacation, etc. as before and after school. This document uses the term "out-of-school" time (OST) to more fully describe all of these times. Comprehensive out-of-school time programs ideally include both Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) to support the school day and School-Age Child Care (SACC) to support working parents. Comprehensive programs provide safe places for students when their parents are not available, but also provide academic support, enrichment activities, and youth development opportunities. According to Joan Lombardi, "*...there is a growing interest in developing tutoring and mentoring programs after school to improve academic achievement. These services may be designed (and funded) to meet twice or three times a week for an hour or two after school. However, for working parents, such activities must be integrated into a program that also meets the needs of their children for adult supervision every afternoon.*"[1] Some stand-alone single-purpose extracurricular programs may serve children who do not need comprehensive services, but some of the same guidelines and safeguards should be available for children at any time they are served by programs outside of school hours and not accompanied by their families.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This document may be used as a guide to developing and evaluating out-of-school time programs for children in kindergarten through eighth grade. Programs that are legally exempt from following the Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers, as described in P.A. 695 of 2002 and P.A. 696 of 2002, must follow the sections in bold type and report to their communities as described in Standard V.B. Other standards are voluntary for all programs, except those programs specifically mandated by their funding to follow the standards. In most cases, the standards indicate very high quality. The Michigan Department of Education intends to follow-up this publication with an instrument for program monitoring and self-assessment. That instrument, when developed, will allow for various levels of quality and means to meet the quality indicated in each of the standards.

[1]Lombardi, J. *Time to Care, Redesigning Child Care to Promote Education, Support Families, and Build Communities*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003.

Model Standards for
Out-of-School Time Programs in Michigan

I. Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Standard:	Quality Indicators:
A. The health, safety, and security of children and youth are protected.	❑ In school buildings, safety and health standards required during the school day are continued in the OST program. ❑ In programs that take place outside school buildings, health and safety regulations follow those of Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers. ❑ Children are supervised at all times, including arrival and departure. ❑ A system is in place to prevent unauthorized individuals from taking children from the program. ❑ Staff plans for different levels of supervision according to the level of risk involved in an activity. ❑ Equipment and facilities are checked daily and maintained in a safe fashion.
B. Written policies and a training system are in place for emergencies.	❑ Staff members are trained in accident prevention and in plans for emergencies. Plans are written and posted prominently. Staff members are trained in emergency practices and regular reviews of emergency plans are conducted. Michigan Department of Education and State Board of Education documents, standards, and recommendations regarding school safety are included in written safety plans. ❑ Contingency plans for emergencies, including closings, are communicated to families of students upon enrollment. ❑ A procedure for emergency communication with families (e.g. phone trees, e-mail and web postings, cell phone usage) is established and communicated. ❑ A phone is available at all times. ❑ Emergency family and medical contact information is maintained in the program and available to program staff at all times.
C. Staff members are all trained to handle emergencies.	❑ **Within three months of beginning to work in the program, each adult program staff member shall hold valid certification in CPR and basic first aid as issued by the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, or a comparable organization or institution approved by the Michigan Department of Education.** Training is updated to remain current. ❑ There is always an individual onsite who has current first aid training, CPR, and blood borne pathogens training.
D. Positive policies and procedures ensure child and staff health.	❑ The environment is clean, and appropriate sanitation, disinfecting, and maintenance procedures are followed. ❑ Sick children and adults do not attend the program. ❑ The spread of illness is contained by proper hand washing procedures and other hygiene practices.

E.	Appropriate transportation rules are followed.	❑	Transportation provided to students follows regulations in the Revised School Code for transporting students to and from school.
		❑	Field trip transportation is arranged with the knowledge and consent of parents, and follows transportation rules required for school field trips or as required by child day care licensing for licensed programs.
		❑	Public Transportation is utilized in the manner approved in the Revised School Code or in Child Day Care Licensing Rules.
F.	Proper procedures for the administration and handling of medication and individual medical procedures are developed.	❑	Procedures are written, implemented and distributed in program handbooks to staff and parents.
G.	The program serves foods and drinks that meet the needs of children.	❑	After-school programs serve a minimum of one snack if children attend fewer than 2 ½ hours. Students who attend longer programs receive nutritional components commensurate with the time spent in the program, including either an additional snack or supper.
		❑	**Nutrition requirements are the same as those that apply to food service during the school day.**
		❑	Deprivation of food is never used as a punishment.
		❑	The program serves healthy foods and drinks.
		❑	The amount and type of food offered is appropriate for the ages and sizes of children.
		❑	Drinking water is readily available at all times.
H.	Food is stored and prepared safely.	❑	**Food storage standards are maintained as required during the school day.**
		❑	Appliances for heating and cooling food are maintained in a safe manner.

II.   Human Relationships and Staffing

Standard:	Quality Indicators:

A. Adult/Child Relationships
   1. Are authentic and positive
   2. Establish primary relationships
	❑ Staff treat children respectfully, positively, and warmly.
	❑ Children appear to be comfortable and happy in the program.
	❑ Staff give attention to children and their individual needs, special interests, and abilities.

B. Child management is handled with care and respect, focusing on prevention and using methodology, which promotes positive self-esteem. Safeguards for children included in the Revised School Code pertain to out-of-school times.	❑ Staff members are kind, fair, and caring to all children. ❑ Staff set appropriate, realistic limits that are consistently enforced. ❑ Staff model and encourage communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution. ❑ Corporal punishment is not allowed.

C. Staff to child ratios and group size are established to insure that authentic, helpful, and caring relationships can be established and maintained between children in the program and the staff. Required minimum staff to child ratios are maintained consistently; high-quality ratios are preferred.	❑ Adequate numbers of qualified staff are hired, trained, and on-site.
	❑ **At least two adult staff members are present in the program at all times when children are present.** Adult staff members are individuals who are 18 years of age or older. A high school student who is 17 and in the final year of a high school career preparation program in child care may count as an adult.
	❑ Groups of children do not exceed 30 in order to maintain a high-quality program. A group consists of those children and their program staff members who function as a unit for activities.
	❑ **Minimum ratios:**
	   • **Grades K to 3—the lesser of one adult for 20 children or the average pupil to teacher ratio during school hours in regular K to 3 classrooms.**
	   • **Grades 4 to 8—the lesser of one adult for 25 children or the average pupil to teacher ratio during school hours in regular 4 to 8 classrooms.**
	❑ High-quality ratios:
	   • Grades K to 3—one adult for ten children.
	   • Grades 4 to 8—one adult for 15 children.
	❑ Mixed-age groups follow the ratio requirement for the youngest children in the group.
	❑ Sufficient staffing is available to meet minimum ratios in both locations when groups are split between indoor and outdoor activities.

D. Staff (program staff and administrative staff) develop open and supportive relationships focused on the needs of the program.	❑ Staff members communicate and cooperate with each other consistently. ❑ Staff members support each other through shared planning, coordination, and flexibility. ❑ Staff members treat each other with respect and tolerance.
E. Staff composition and relationships with each other and the children regularly reflect sensitivity to diversity and gender equity.	❑ The program policy prefers employment of staff members who reflect the languages, cultures, and genders of the children and families served. ❑ Staff training is provided in diversity. ❑ Staff members are sensitive to culture and gender.

F. Policies and standards are developed and written related to staff qualifications for each position, including written job descriptions used in recruiting and hiring staff.	❑ A written job description is available for each position in the OST program, which includes the title and qualifications needed, job duties, and salary/benefit range. ❑ The plan for staff selection includes checking prior references.
G. A written plan for recruitment, orientation, and retention of staff is developed and implemented.	❑ The written plan for recruitment, orientation and retention of paid, volunteer and community staff is in place prior to the start of a new program. This plan is consistent and used by administrators for implementation and decision-making. The plan is considered by board members and administrators in budget development. Orientation is planned to take place prior to staff working with children.
H. Each site has an adult site supervisor or director with decision-making responsibilities.	❑ The site supervisor/director is at least 21 years of age or has a bachelor's degree and experiential background including college-level work and/or experience in education, child development/child psychology, recreation, social work, youth development, community organization, or another field relevant to work with students during out-of-school times. ❑ The site supervisor/director is available on-site when students are on-site.
I. A written plan for on-going staff development is implemented and budgeted for. This plan must include, at a minimum: • child/youth development; • behavior management; • child/adult CPR/first aid/emergency procedures; • child abuse and neglect prevention and reporting; • record keeping; and • appropriate activities.	❑ The plan for staff development is incorporated into the overall staff development plan for the school or agency, is reflected in the budget, and is based on an assessment of the needs of the program and the staff. Staff qualifications, as well as program evaluations, are taken into consideration and are consistently implemented. ❑ **Within three months of beginning to work in the program, each adult program staff member shall hold valid certification in CPR and basic first aid as issued by the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, or a comparable organization or institution approved by the Michigan Department of Education.**
J. A written, board-approved compensation plan is developed to retain qualified staff and maintain quality programs.	❑ The written, board approved compensation plan is clearly related to the local market, staff qualifications, program quality, and staff retention. This plan is consistently implemented with short-term and long-term fiscal sustainability plans in place.

K.	All staff who work with children are physically/mentally able to perform outlined job duties and are free of criminal convictions.	❑	Staff physicals are required prior to employment, and are updated at least every three years.
		❑	**Criminal background checks are required prior to employment. Persons with felony convictions or misdemeanor convictions related to child abuse and/or neglect must not be employed. The Department of State Police is required to provide information to an OST program to the same extent as if the OST program were a school district.**
			• **If a school district, PSA or ISD uses its employees to staff the program, compliance with sections 1230 and 1230A of the Revised School Code is required, as if the person were being hired as a teacher.**
			• **If a school district, PSA, or ISD contracts for a program, the contract shall contain assurance that the contractor will comply with sections 1230 or 1230A of the Revised School Code before hiring a staff person, as if the person were being hired as a teacher.**
			• **A program not operated by or contracted for by a school district, PSA or ISD must follow the hiring requirements for staff indicated in the Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers.**
L.	Staff evaluation is established and used for ongoing professional development.	❑	Each staff member is evaluated semi-annually by the supervisor for the purpose of professional development. Staff evaluations are used to guide decision-making about professional development activities connected to program goals and objectives.

III. Indoor and Outdoor Environment

Standard:	Quality Indicators:
A. The indoor environment is established to offer a safe, comfortable, age-appropriate, stable facility with adequate space in which to carry out the program.	❑ There is specific space that is safe, clean, and comfortable with enough room (a minimum of 35 square feet per child) for all program activities. ❑ The facility is arranged and furnished for a variety of learning and recreational activities, including space for active and quiet play, homework, and spaces for groups of children, and privacy for individual children. ❑ There is adequate space for storage of equipment and materials, as well as personal possessions of children and staff. ❑ **Indoor facilities are comparable to the rooms used by pupils during the regular school day.**
B. The outdoor environment is established to offer a safe and age-appropriate area for daily outdoor play and sports.	❑ There is adequate outdoor space available for large motor and sports activities daily. ❑ Children may choose to use a wide variety of outdoor equipment and games for active and quiet play. ❑ The National Playground Safety Standards are recommended when applicable.
C. All materials and equipment, both indoor and outdoor, are purchased and maintained to provide learning and play experiences that are age-appropriate, individually supportive and regularly offer multiple choices.	❑ All outdoor equipment and spaces are suitable for the sizes and abilities of all children and are maintained in a safe manner.
D. Materials and equipment provide an enriched environment with regularly refreshed materials (including enough, in good repair, covering a range of activities and ages).	❑ Enough materials and equipment are available to provide for at least three activity spaces per child. ❑ There is a full range of learning and recreational equipment and materials (sand/water, woodworking, art, literacy, recreational materials, etc.). ❑ Materials and equipment are available for a variety of choices, individual and group interests.
E. The environment is accessible to children and families with disabilities.	❑ Program is barrier-free.
F. The environment reflects the diversity represented in the population of the community and gender equity.	❑ Décor, materials and resources reflect family backgrounds and interests of children. ❑ There are posters and photographs that reflect diverse populations. Materials and equipment are representative of a variety of cultures/populations.
G. The environment reflects various learning styles and abilities of all children.	❑ There is a variety of age-appropriate materials within active and quiet spaces to accommodate children's learning styles and abilities.

IV. Program and Activities

Standard:	Quality Indicators:
A. Activities are planned and supported through resources which reflect the interests and abilities of the children enrolled and provide support for the school-day activities, especially supplementing the areas of development not regularly provided during the school day.	❑ **Resources are available and utilized to provide a variety of child-centered activities that increase the opportunities for children to develop in all areas (social, emotional, intellectual, academic, physical, and cultural).**
B. The comprehensive curriculum addresses the needs of the whole child, individual as well as group needs, and supports the school curriculum.	❑ Staff members demonstrate awareness of children's individual daily needs and learning styles and plan to accommodate them in daily programming. ❑ There is a clear rationale for the activities chosen. ❑ The program supports the school's School Improvement Plan. ❑ Activities have educational, social-emotional, physical or life-skills outcomes.
C. Materials are of sufficient quantity and type to support the curriculum for all ages.	❑ A minimum of three developmentally appropriate activity choices are available for each child daily. The enriched environment includes a wide variety of multiple materials and equipment, which are available to children.
D. Program development and implementation is carried out in such a way to include significant child choice and involvement in planning.	❑ Staff give children many opportunities to choose what they will do, how they will do it, and with whom. ❑ Children are included in the planning process. ❑ Children are encouraged to offer ideas, take the initiative, and make suggestions.
E. Parents are appropriately involved in the planning, management, evaluation, implementation and improvement of the program.	❑ Multiple systems are in place for parents to be involved and to provide input regarding policies, procedures, curriculum, etc. ❑ Multiple systems are in place for maintaining communication with parents. ❑ Families and community members feel welcome, respected, and comfortable in the program. ❑ Expectations for adult participation in the program are clearly communicated.
F. School day and OST activities are linked in ways that support the academic development of each individual child.	❑ OST programming includes developmentally appropriate academic support and enrichment activities that complement the school curriculum. ❑ OST staff members work with individual teachers and parents to support children's homework needs. ❑ OST staff members participate in school-wide activities and goals.

G.	Staff are educated on the character education curriculum components and can demonstrate their presence in annual programming.	❑	Curriculum planning includes annually at least two or more of the following components: • service learning; • character development; • asset building; • leadership; • decision making skills for healthy choices; • peer activities—older with younger; • intergenerational activities; and • peer mediation.
H.	Computer technology experience, which helps children become comfortable with both skills and materials, should be available at all ages.	❑ ❑	Computers and age-appropriate software (or access to) are present in the program and used regularly by all participants. Computer and technology opportunities are consistent with State Board of Education policy, including the November 2001 report of the *Embracing the Information Age Task Force*.
I.	The OST daily schedule provides for regular outdoor activities.	❑ ❑	Each child has a chance to play outdoors at least 30 minutes each three-hour block of time, weather permitting. When weather does not permit outdoor participation, active indoor movement and games are offered.

V. Administration

Standard:	Quality Indicators:
A. Prior to developing a new program, a comprehensive needs assessment is conducted and the results are used in planning.	❑ A needs assessment is administered to prospective parents, school staff, and when appropriate, to children. Program development and implementation is based on the data.
B. Stakeholders, including parents, guardians and family members, school personnel, businesses, service organizations, and others, in the school and community are identified and involved and/or informed of the program, its benefit to the children and families, and the impact of the program on the community as a whole.	❑ OST staff, school staff, and members of the community conduct regular meetings to coordinate programming, curriculum, and goals. ❑ Ongoing communication and linkages, including formal advisory committees, between OST staff, school staff, community members, and families are established and encouraged. ❑ Community goals for children, as identified by the county multipurpose collaborative body, ISD, or municipal entities, are incorporated into the program. ❑ **In an exempt program, the board of the school district or intermediate school district or board of directors of the public school academy, in consultation with the director of the program and the principal of the school at which the program is operated, must develop, adopt and annually review a policy concerning the program, that addresses safety procedures, including:** 　• **First aid;** 　• **Food safety;** 　• **Discipline;** 　• **Dispensing and storage of medication;** 　• **Access to student emergency information; and** 　• **Access to telephones.** **Not later than September 1 of each school year, the board of the school district or intermediate school district or board of directors of the public school academy shall adopt and submit to the secretary of the intermediate school board a resolution affirming that the program and the corresponding policies comply with these requirements. In addition, a copy of the policy must be submitted. The policy must be available to the public, including any annual reviews or revisions.** ❑ **Beginning July 1, 2003, the board of a school district or intermediate school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall ensure that any written information published or distributed by the school district, public school academy, or intermediate school district concerning an exempt out-of-school time program must include a statement in at least 10-point type notifying the public whether the program follows or deviates from the model standards established in this document.**
C. The budget established reflects input from appropriate stakeholders, utilizing a process that is inclusive and comprehensive.	❑ The budget development process includes the program director, other school administrative staff and the district/agency budget staff.

D.	Fund development, revenue, and fiscal management systems are planned for and implemented to provide for a high-quality program supporting these standards.	❑	Revenues and expenses are reported and monitored utilizing effective business office procedures. Fees are established to support quality programming. Grant funds, Family Independence Agency subsidies, scholarships and donations are used to support program goals.
E.	The program has developed a policies and procedures handbook for parents and staff.	❑	Clear, concise, thorough handbooks are developed, updated regularly and given to each parent and employee (one for parents and one for staff). The policies and procedures are administered in a consistent and equitable manner and include at least: • enrollment policies; • adult behavior expectations; • attendance policies (including sign-in/sign-out procedures); • administration and handling of medications; • emergency contingency plans; and • behavior management procedures.
F.	A system of regular program evaluation is established and used for on-going program improvement.	❑	At least twice a year, staff, children, and parents are given the opportunity to evaluate the program and the results are used for systematic program improvements.
G.	Program management training is in place for site directors/supervisors.	❑	Professional development is planned for and implemented to include: • program content; • program delivery system; and • methods for working effectively with children, parents, and staff.

VI.   Single-Purpose Programs

Standard:	Quality Indicators:
A. Programs that are established to provide one type of activity for a limited time period meet minimum requirements to ensure students' health and safety.	❑ Standards I.A.-I.H. and II.A. and II.B. are met.
B. Programs are appropriate for the students enrolled.	❑ Activities are age appropriate. ❑ Activities meet the learning styles and interests of the enrolled students.
C. Appropriate staff members are present at all times.	❑ At least one adult is present at all times. ❑ Staff members have specialty expertise relevant to the content/skill of the program being offered.

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